

Foreign Trade of Czechoslovakia

Since the 1948 coup, the foreign trade of Czechoslovakia has doubled in value and has undergone changes beneficial to the Bloc and in particular the USSR. Whereas in 1948 the Bloc accounted for 32% of total trade, today it is responsible for about 65% of Czech trade. The USSR is the chief trading partner, usually accounting for one-third of the turnover. The share of trade with western nations declined after 1948 and reached a low of 22% in 1953 but has recovered in the past three years largely as a result of increased trade with underdeveloped Free World countries. Under Communist control increasing emphasis has been placed on the development of heavy industry which has created a growing capability for exporting machinery and equipment. By 1956 this category represented 40% of Czech exports. Czech writers themselves characterize their country as having been made into a machine shop for the Bloc.

The most significant recent developments in the trade field are the Czech interests in expanding their western trade and in promoting specialization among Bloc countries. Czech economists argue that expanding trade with the West will enable Czechoslovakia to be the first Bloc country to match western standards of living. Also, they have been arguing at intra-Bloc conferences that existing inefficiencies and duplication of effort must be eliminated if the Bloc as a whole is to enjoy the fruits of division of labor in foreign trade.

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	1950	1954	1955	1956	1957
<u>Imports (million \$)</u>	620	933	1052	1185	1385
Major Bloc Partners in %					
USSR				33	38
China				6	5
Poland				5	4
S2G				10	10
Hungary				6	5
<u>Exports (million \$)</u>	733	1005	1177	1387	1356
Major Bloc Partners in %					
USSR				31	29
China				5	6
Poland				7	6
S2G				10	10
Hungary				4	6
<u>Turnover (million \$)</u>	1353	1938	2229	2572	2741
Bloc in %	55	75	70	67	*65
(major partners:					
USSR	28	35	34	33	33
China	1	10	8	6	9
Poland	10	8	8	7	5
S2G	4	7	7	10	10
Hungary	4	7	6	6	6
West in %	45	25	30	33	*35
(Underdeveloped areas)		10	14	14	*15

*Preliminary